MIP

Citizen Involvement and the Neighborhood Improvement Program

Ministry of Housing

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Ⓣ Ontario

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Preface

This resource book was prepared primarily for municipalities by the community renewal branch, Ministry of Housing, in conjunction with the office on community consultation, Ministry of Culture and Recreation. It is designed to assist citizens, municipal planners and administrators in considering some underlying principles of citizen involvement in community rehabilitation.

By outlining some participatory techniques and some examples, the document may assist and encourage communities in involving their residents in Neighborhood Improvement Programs [NIP] to the fullest extent. Emphasis was placed on documenting examples of programs which reflected characteristics similar to those of NIP.

The document is not a guide or manual. It has been developed as a source of information for municipalities who may be embarking upon their first significant experience with citizen involvement in planning processes.

Introduction

The involvement of residents in the process of planning and implementing the Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP) is a prerequisite for federal and provincial funding.* Previous experiences in involving citizens in decision-making that affects local communities have shown themselves to be a challenging, rewarding and sometimes frustrating component of the planning process.

Experience has also shown that citizens can become frustrated with the delays in approvals, with complex financing mechanisms and bureaucratic jargon associated with community oriented programs. The result is apathy, loss of confidence and trust in planners and politicians, and possibly rejection of the program. As the onus falls on municipal governments to implement NIP, it is imperative that municipalities understand the need to establish viable mechanisms for citizen participation from the beginning.

With this in mind, this resource book is intended for citizens, planners, and municipal administrators who are participating in NIP and is designed to:

•Examine some of the principles, benefits and dilemmas underlying citizen involvement in the planning process as called for in the Neighborhood Improvement Program.

•Provide a resource for implementing the Neighborhood Improvement Program in keeping with the program characteristics as specified in the administration guide.

The basis of this resource book, a revision of the Three Rs of Citizen Participation: A Guide to Municipal Urban Renewal Administrators, which was published by the former Department of Municipal Affairs in 1969, is one of a number of documents to be published by the community renewal branch of the Ministry of Housing, relating to the NIP planning process in general.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

There are a number of principles underlying the concept of citizen involvement which should be remembered by both residents and municipal officials and should be reflected in the design of the public participation program.

Resident involvement as public policy

Citizen involvement must form an integral part of community conservation and rehabilitation, and must be demonstrated by municipalities as a matter of public policy. This policy should reflect a significant level of trust between residents and their municipality. Openness in discussion and honest exchange of information must occur. Both residents and the municipality should recognize the mutual benefits their working partnership will generate and should strive to develop an atmosphere of co-operation and trust.

Resident involvement as representation of interests

The representation of citizens and residents in the decision-making process must be diverse and organized to be effective. There is no formula for obtaining it other than diligent and persistent contact with the individuals and interest groups who are living in the community. The objective for obtaining representative views is to reach a middle ground where practical needs and realities as expressed by citizens and residents can be balanced and blended with existing official plans and neighborhood improvement objectives for improving and upgrading the neighborhood.

Resident involvement as collective responsibility

Citizens, residents, planners and municipal administrators involved in NIP all have definite responsibilities to fulfil if their collective efforts are to serve the best interests of the neighborhood residents and the community at large.

In short, responsibility means being accountable for actions taken on the part of both planner and citizen. It implies a willingness to support the consequences of action and the assumption that both the program and alternate solutions have been carefully weighed in the light of possible impact upon area residents and upon the surrounding community which must eventually bear the social and economic costs.

CHANGING ATTITUDES

Urban planners have usually assumed most of the responsibility for designing and initiating major structural changes to the physical environment. For the most part, these changes have reflected their concern for physical amenities such as land use, municipal services and general aesthetics. The social impact of these changes was not always clearly understood or considered to be within the scope of urban planning. A new awareness of the affects of planning beyond physical aspects is developing, and what was acceptable ten years ago is not necessarily the right approach today.

Today, both citizens and planners are no longer satisfied with an approach to planning that fails to recognize a role for citizen involvement for four basic reasons:

•Residents are becoming increasingly aware of the implications of planning decisions on their neighborhoods and are seeking to influence the direction which their community appears to be taking.

•Planners are realizing that resident involvement throughout the planning process leads to a more acceptable plan at the local level and a more satisfactory and effective procedure at the political level.

•Politicians are now recognizing that increased citizen involvement in local decision-making strengthens their role as elected representatives.

•Residents, planners and politicians are now realizing that they each form essential components of the planning team. Municipal administrators, engineers, builders, clerks and treasurers supplement and round out this approach to planning.

As a result, new opportunities are being created for citizen involvement in urban planning and residents are beginning to take a more active interest in their physical and social well-being to the benefit of their neighborhood and of the entire community.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN NIP PLANNING

Citizen involvement and program objectives

Citizen involvement in planning means that the people who will be affected by planning decisions should have a say in making those decisions. This implies a close working relationship between the public and the planner in understanding the program objectives, collecting and analyzing data, defining the program goals, interpreting problems, and determining and implementing a solution.

The initiative for a NIP project may come from either the municipality or the residents, or both. In the same way, the proposals as to how citizens will participate may come from either group. The exact manner in which the planning is undertaken should be worked out between the municipality

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* Part III, section 27(2), National Housing Act (1973)

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and the residents together.

The different interest groups that are involved in the program may identify concerns which relate to social conditions in the community. Even though operating and program costs are not eligible costs in NIP, health, social services and recreational concerns may be incorporated in the municipality's NIP objectives as an essential component of the program's goals. These examples of social goals run parallel to physical goals and are compatible with NIP objectives and characteristics as specified in the program's administration guide. They are to:

•Act as a catalyst and stimulate resident self-help in the rehabilitation of homes and the community.

•Conserve and improve those neighborhoods which are threatened by physical and social deterioration.

•Improve amenities and to improve the housing and living conditions of the residents of such neighborhoods.

•Do required improvements to municipal services and public utilities.

•Stimulate increased co-ordination of other government programs with NIP.

Phases of citizen involvement

In relating citizen involvement to NIP, there are a number of phases within the planning process that may be identified as areas in which citizen involvement may occur. These phases are depicted in fig. I. Individual municipalities may see the need to combine or overlap various activities during NIP in the course of designing their unique programs.

In phase one, "identification of needs and definition of program objectives," areas for citizen involvement could include:

•Collection and analysis of data to assist in identifying neighborhood needs.

•Definition of neighborhood needs.

•Relating neighborhood needs to the program objectives of NIP.

•Collection of data for developing alternate proposals.

In phase two, "development of alternate proposals," areas for citizen involvement with municipal officials could be fostered in the:

•Encouragement of a representative, neighborhood organization to develop proposals with municipal council and other decision-makers.

•Provision of advice, expertise and technical resources to assist residents in defining needs and in preparing alternate proposals.

•Assessment of alternative proposals.

•Preparation of a plan to satisfy community needs in accordance with the specified program objectives.

In phase three, "implementation of selected proposal," areas for further citizen involvement could include:

•Encouragement of independent action on the private front from both individuals and groups.

•Identification and co-ordination of other federal, provincial and municipal programs and agencies to assist in implementing NIP.

Phase four, "adaptation and evaluation," allows for:

•Feedback, re-examination and assessment of the local NIP process for the benefit of future municipal applications.

•Consideration by the municipality of the program's success or failure in recommending adjustments to senior levels of government on administering the programs and the amounts of assistance provided.

In each of these phases of citizen involvement, working with residents is a basic principle. It is not only asking them what they think, but trying to clarify the dynamics of the situation with them, and working with residents to solve the problem and attain the goals that are important to them.

FIGURE I: PHASES OF CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

It is a complex and at times difficult process. Often the resident initially doesn't seem to care or know enough to contribute. It is sometimes difficult for the citizen to fully understand the comprehensive or long range planning goals and objectives stated in an official plan, when all he really wants to know is how these goals and objectives affect him. While it may be easy to get residents to express immediate dissatisfaction over a specific issue, such as home demolition in a neighborhood, these types of issues reflect only a small part of the total participation process.

The involvement of citizens must be especially emphasized in the early stages of the planning process before decisions regarding needs, priorities or design are made.

The key to a successfully implemented NIP is the initial development of a constructive, responsible process of interaction between citizens and municipal officials which extends throughout the planning process.

TECHNIQUES TO ENCOURAGE CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

The means by which a municipality may encourage a constructive exchange of ideas and information between citizens and planners are unique to each neighborhood or community. However, there are a number of methods for involving residents in a planning process which the municipality may use:

•Distribution of resource material (flyers, brochures, tabloids, explaining the program and encouraging citizens to get involved).

•Utilization of mass media (newspaper, radio or TV advertisements outlining the process and keeping people up-to-date).

•Statistical methods (planner or citizen sponsored community questionnaires or surveys).

•Telephone and letter contacts (to inform, clarify, encourage).

•Face-to-face encounters (between planner and residents to maintain maximum contact and information exchange).

•Written submissions (documentation submitted by citizens).

•Community secretariat or storefront (ideally a non-partisan community service in which all community groups have equal access to its resources of typing and duplication, central information, planning consultation, volunteer support to groups, leadership development, inter-group liaison).

•Resident working committees (a representative committee of residents who are appointed or chosen by the community to work with planners and elected officials to solve specific problems).

•Block organizations (community structures composed of one or a series of resident committees whose elected members represent the interest of the residents of their area and whose delegates work in conjunction with local officials to solve identified problems).

•Public meetings (to provide a forum for open discussion).

•Citizen advisory groups (a representative body of residents established to provide advice in a consultative role with planners).

•Planning seminars (a resident and planner study session with the objective of blending neighborhood attitudes, values, expressed needs and priorities with planning objectives).

•Community boards (a representative group of individuals either elected from or appointed by the community to represent their interests and who have the legitimacy to delegate authority to enact their wishes).

Some of these techniques may function well, others may not be as effective. Each municipality must assess its own capabilities and requirements in light of its own goals.

The accompanying case studies utilize a number of these techniques in various forms. These examples of how other municipalities conducted community rehabilitation projects will illustrate the importance of the need to gear municipal programs to the specific requirements of the communities.

INTRODUCTION

The following case studies describe methods of involving citizens which have been used in community rehabilitation programs in Canada and the United States. The examples illustrate the following techniques:

University City, 1966—   A community council task force is established by the municipality.

Riverview, 1971—   An existing citizen action group in the community establishes a steering committee and working committee.

Harbor City East, 1972—   Municipal planners call for discussions with residents and community groups to be followed by public hearings.

Bushtown, 1972—   Both residents and planners hold discussion and hire a program co-ordinator.

Lakestown, 1974—   Municipal planners establish citizen working committees.

Waterville, 1974—   Municipal planners establish a residents' steering committee, a technical advisory committee and hire community liaison workers.

Each example was selected because it illustrates some particular process or method of involving the public in the various stages of a rehabilitation project. The case studies do not represent a recommended or best method that citizens, planners or administrators could employ in their communities. As stated earlier, each community must establish its own "best method" for involving its residents.

Case studies

CASE STUDY NO. 1—UNIVERSITY CITY, 1966

The community setting

The west end of University City is 500 acres and is directly adjacent to the central business district. Major transportation routes bound the area on three sides and provide easy access to the area's businesses, industries, institutions and homes.

Over the years, the area substantially declined in condition and appearance. The decline had been caused by a combination of factors including age, lack of upkeep, high turnover of owners and tenants. By 1966, public housing developments provided almost half of the accommodation for the local population. Most of the housing in the west end was substandard and a substantial proportion of it lacked such amenities as hot water and bathing facilities.

Most of the 20,000 residents in the west end had low incomes. In general, education levels were significantly lower than in the rest of the city; disease and infant mortality rates were significantly higher, and the rate of unemployment was staggering.

The area was and is still served by a number of social service agencies offering a variety of assistance: employment and training programs; legal aid and home management programs; educational, dental and health programs; and day care, preschool, youth and senior citizen programs.

As a result of many of these social programs, the community had developed an effective system of reaching and involving its residents. Neighborhood block clubs operated under the co-ordinating umbrella of an active community council established by the neighborhood community groups.

The planning issues

In an attempt to rehabilitate a neighborhood which had been previously designated for urban renewal within this community, the local community council requested an opportunity to discuss with city planners the future development.

Initial discussions focused on the need for clearance and redevelopment. However, it soon became apparent to both planners and residents that any future considerations for this neighborhood would have to be developed within the context of planning for the larger community. Municipal officials came to feel that many responses to community problems had been "incorrectly directed" by local agencies due to a lack of community participation in determining needs and priorities.

Process of involvement

To solve these complex problems, the establishment of a representative task force was proposed. Both City Hall and the community council agreed that the task force should be composed of people of the area who would be most affected by changes, including residents, and representatives of business, industry and institutions. City officials from "hard services" departments would also be represented.

After the plan was officially sanctioned by City Council, the mayor appointed 18 members to the task force whose responsibilities were to:

• Develop a long-range plan and implementation program for the community.

• Advise and recommend action to City Council, the planning commission and the mayor on all matters affecting the development of the community.

In total, the task force represented seven community associations, one business association, one industrial association, two institutions (religious and educational), two housing-interest groups, and four municipal departments.

Members of the city planning staff were made available to the task force to guide the group through the planning process and to provide necessary technical expertise. A chairman who had no political ambitions and no economic interests in the area was unanimously selected by the task force from outside its membership.

Meetings were held every two weeks (or more frequently if the need arose); all the meetings were open to the public and all were held in the local area.

Each task force representative was responsible for relating progress back to his own association, and each was expected to report the wishes and desires of his particular group to task force meetings. Task force technical staff assisted representatives by providing summaries of activities, explaining planning decisions, and by providing maps and other resources.

Detailed planning for the community and the development of a program to implement the plan was accomplished simultaneously. Funds were sought for community rehabilitation and steps were taken to provide new housing prior to any housing clearance. Together, task force members and city officials presented submissions to appropriate levels of government to discuss funding procedures.

Summary

The commitment by the task force to community involvement was deemed most successful by all participants even though the process was often slow and time-consuming. Rather than become 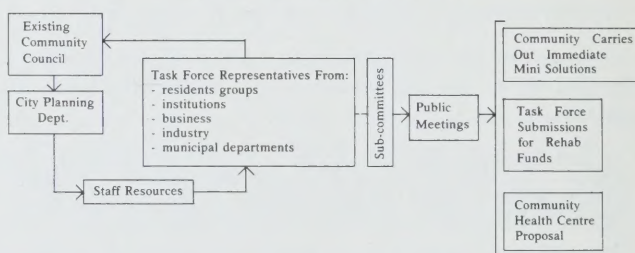an "all-talk-no-action" group, the task force concentrated their energy on short-term goals. However, they did not neglect long-term goals. Immediate problems were solved by residents and municipal officials working together.

To encourage immediate results, the task force established a number of specialized sub-committees to deal with such problems as recreation, health, and beautification. These sub-committees, composed of one or two task force members and a number of local residents, worked directly with city departments and had a substantial degree of success. Two new tot-lots were produced and a vacant building was converted into a children's "run-about" playhouse which offered after-school and summer programs. A community health centre was proposed and sources of funding for its operation were sought. Sitting areas, landscaping and clean up-fix up campaigns were launched to immediately improve the general appearance off the community.

Overall, this community process demanded a substantial commitment on the part of community residents who took pride in the development of their area. With a number of readily available resources and reliance on the existing community social networks, this public participation process accomplished much more than rehabilitating housing stock. In addition, community residents learned how to solve many of their immediate problems by working with city officials to plan for the future.

Fig. II represents University City's public involvement process in community rehabilitation:

FIGURE II: UNIVERSITY CITY CITIZEN-INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

CASE STUDY NO. 2—RIVERVIEW, 1971

The community setting

The City of Riverview, located in the middle of a once booming lumber trade area, is a city of contrasts. Many old "established" families live here as well as a substantial number of immigrants. Massive and deteriorating Victorian mansions and smaller turn-of-the-century homes in the downtown area are balanced by blossoming suburban developments on the city's periphery. Many traditional and historic buildings have been renovated and preserved while glass and steel office towers loom over the central business district.

The development of the city's housing stock reflects the strong sense of history in Riverview. The union of small villages to form Riverview over a century ago has not stifled any sense of local identity. In this way, the Hillcrest neighborhood located in the central area regards itself as a largely self-sufficient community.

Proximity to higher educational institutions and the

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business district have shaped Hillcrest's development. Many students, senior citizens and immigrants have found its housing inexpensive and close to shopping and other facilities. A number of local churches and the city's recreation and health centre have provided social programs for the entire community.

The planning issues

The social costs of Hillcrest's location have been reflected in the developing pressures to replace existing housing stock with institutional and business expansion. Both schools and commerical facilities have been demanding increased space for their very specialized uses. Residents grew increasingly concerned over the disappearance of neighborhood homes and the apparent lack of municipal concern for the disintegration of their community. Many long-term residents were being forced out of the area and no provision for social facilities was made by encroaching institutions. It seemed to many residents that they themselves would have to initiate a process of neighborhood conservation and protection.

Process of involvement

In an attempt to combat these encroachments, residents in Hillcrest formed a ratepayers group, Hillcrest Action Committee. The group approached city hall for the recognition of the need for a neighborhood planning study. In support, a second group of residents formed the Citizens' Committee for Planning in Hillcrest to assist the Hillcrest Action Committee in drafting an official neighborhood plan.

Residents groups and city planners together developed a method for proceeding with a planning study. Working committees were established for the east, central and west areas. These committees worked with city staff in their respective areas.

In a public meeting, however, the community decided to streamline the process by electing, largely from within the ranks of the area working committees, a steering committee and a permanent co-ordinator. (See fig. III).

The steering committee was established to perform three major functions: it was to act as a co-ordinating planning body and liaison with the community by means of holding public meetings; to initiate through its area committees a program of community animation and task forces for special interests (street use, traffic, housing); and to hold consultations with city planners and community groups.

Over the months, the steering committee came to play a prominent role while the responsibilities of the area working committees tended to wither away. Many of the community animation activities were assumed by summer and winter employment programs.

In the course of developing concept plans, the steering committee was assisted in a number of ways by City Hall. A field office was established, grants were provided for supplies, and city staff worked with the committee to ensure sharing information to develop the plans.

However, while planning staff collected data on "hard" services, residents collected "soft" data on the social aspects of the neighborhood. Both planning teams developed separate concept plans based on this shared information. A parallel planning process was functioning.

This approach to the development of concept plans was as much an exercise in the building of personal relationships as it was one of physical planning. Over the 10-month period, the relationship between the citizens and city staff evolved to

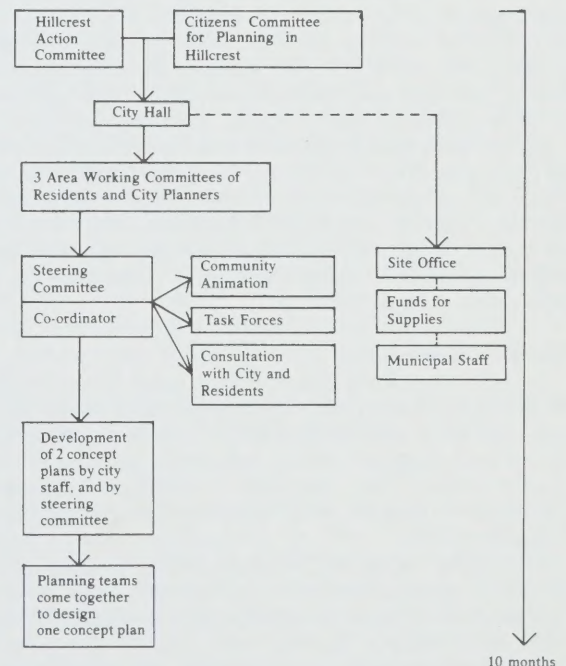the point where joint planning could begin in earnest without sacrificing differences in emphasis.

Summary

Hillcrest accomplished many of its tasks by independent action. The city became involved in the preliminary phases of the process simply because of initiative on the part of the Hillcrest Action Committee. Both residents and city staff realized the benefits of working together throughout the process. Residents offered expertise on local priorities, needs and social networks in the community; city staff offered technical and financial resources otherwise unavailable to the community.

The time required to complete the initial stages of this parallel planning process may be some indication of the evolutionary nature of this method. Due to the separate development of plans by both "teams", many unanticipated wrinkles in the relationship took time to be ironed out. Previous experience with city officials no doubt inhibited the development of a less complicated and repetitious process. However this method of involvement has proved very successful for this community.

As a result of their experience with planning officials, some residents of Hillcrest have formed a successful non-profit housing corporation to further improve upon and protect the neighborhood housing stock. These individuals have shown that involvement with city officials may leads to more than was originally envisioned, and that residents may become committed to the upgrading and rehabilitation of their community to an unprecedented degree.

FIGURE III: HILLCREST CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

10 months

CASE STUDY NO. 3—HARBOR CITY EAST, 1972

The community setting

The northwest section of Harbor City East had been under the threat of urban renewal for a number of years. Despite

repeated announcements from City Hall, no action was undertaken and the area continued to fall behind its neighboring communities. During the early years of this decade, the area again became the target for some form of urban rehabilitiation.

The community had been on the decline for a number of years, and to many it represented the worst aspects of inner city life: buildings were deteriorating; resident turnover was very high; the crime rate continued to climb.

As part of a municipal-government decentralization and reorganization, City Hall had established district planning boards throughout the municipality in an attempt to reflect local priorities and needs. Due to the geography of this community, two local boards were affected by plans to rehabilitate the community. Also included in the area were a number of active civic and community groups who had become quite disillusioned and distrusting because of the numerous unfulfilled promises from City Hall.

The planning process

Due to the acute shortage of low cost housing in the municipality, the city proposed to implement a policy of "vest pocket" housing projects. Selective reconstruction was intended to provide additional housing units in deteriorating communities which required low cost housing. In this way, a minimum number of houses would be demolished. However, no prior consultation with residents with respect to this policy decision had occurred.

The city's planning and urban design staff selected a particular neighborhood within the northwest section of Harbor City East and organized a public meeting to explain their plans to the residents. The meeting was a failure for a number of reasons. Perhaps most importantly, the neighborhood selected by city staff did not coincide with residents' perceptions of their neighborhood boundaries. Secondly, the local residents' groups distrusted municipal officials and expressed their suspicions and hostility towards City Hall planning projects during the meeting.

With this unpleasant and discouraging experience in mind, city planners were forced to re-evaluate their approach toward citizen involvement. It became quite apparent that for the planners to successfully initiate a resident involvement process for community rehabilitation, the usual method of presenting detailed concepts and plans to residents for their approval would not suffice.

Process of involvement

City officials realized that one of the most successful means of involving residents was to utilize existing citizens associations, and local community leaders. The planners began to rely on local clergy to identify community groups. Where no group existed, the planners initiated a community development process and helped to organize citizens' associations.

During the course of discussing the issues with the community groups, planners became aware of a number of local priorities which had not been previously considered.

The neighborhood did not want "vest pockets" of low income housing; community groups felt that a mix of low and moderate income housing was more suitable.

The neighborhood felt that emphasis should be placed on rehabilitation, not on home clearance. Older, sound buildings should be salvaged and preserved to help maintain the character of the area.

The exteriors of houses could not be used as the sole criterion for home removal. Many residents invested their earnings on the inside of homes, a situation not easily determined by windshield surveys.

There were a number of other neighborhood problems which residents considered much more important than housing rehabilitation. These included garbage collection and the placement of welfare families.

As a result, city officials spent a considerable amount of time and energy discussing with neighborhood residents the types of alterations they preferred to see in the local environment. A storefront office which housed planning displays and models was established and opened to all neighborhood residents, especially those who had been unable to attend any of the numerous community meetings.

The planners assumed the responsibility of drafting the plan based on suggestions from community groups. In turn, each community group was required to ratify the plan before it was presented to the district planning boards for their approval.

The last step in the process was an open public hearing held at City Hall. Here, community residents spoke in favor of the plan. Although some individuals were still not satisfied with the results of these resident-planner negotiations, they realized the constraints of the program.

Summary

It would appear that the planners realized that the degree of participation in this neighborhood was almost directly related to the amount of real control residents had over the final decisions. The traditional approach to citizen participation as originally attempted—the information meeting—generated hostility and frustration. In order to realize a successful project, the officials were required to alter their outlook towards citizen involvement and did so willing. As a result, they involved community residents to a much more significant degree.

In the course of directing this participatory process, the city planners made a number of suggestions for future projects, including:
- Single working committee should be created which includes representatives from all relevant interest groups in the neighborhood.
- Citizens' committees could be either elected or appointed (both types have advantages).
- Prior to the public hearing, local hearings or ratification meetings should be held. The working committee should be responsible for marshalling support for what is essentially its own plan.

It would appear that city planners learned a valuable lesson. In the final analysis, consensus was reached on a neighborhood level and alternatives were discussed in a forum in which the residents felt most comfortable—the community group.

CASE STUDY NO. 4—BUSHTOWN, 1972

The community setting

Bushtown is a small residential community of about 1,500 people located on the fringe of North City, Canada. In 1959, Bushtown had presented a grey picture of improvised and unserviced homes, littered yards, and narrow dirt roads. A tangled history of land ownership and growth had resulted in the development of an essentially unorganized and unplanned

area with no municipal controls. Many of Bushtown's residents did not legally hold title to the land upon which their homes stood. As an unorganized community, Bushtown had no building restrictions and homes were built at random locations. Lack of concern and necessary funds over the years had resulted in many homes being unfinished. Services were nonexistent as no taxes were collected to pay for them. As a result, there was a lack of adequate sewage and water systems. Although residents were concerned with the haphazard pattern of development in their community as its lack of both "hard" and "soft" services, there was no citizen group or community association which could initiate organized improvement activities.

By 1972, Bushtown's appearance had changed dramatically: the littered yards were gone; dilapidated homes had been rehabilitated or removed; roads had been expanded, widened, and paved; and water and sewage lines had been established. Fire protection had been established, and the town was now being serviced by the social service agencies of North City. This community rehabilitation process had not occurred overnight, but rather over a period of some thirteen years. However, in spite of the unusually long length of time required to rehabilitate the community, the process of rehabilitation and resident involvement in that process is worth noting.

The planning issues

The major impetus behind the community's recognition of a need for change came from the unacceptable level of hazardous sanitary conditions. Because no sewage system existed, residents of both Bushtown and North City began to fear a threat to public health. As a result, in 1958, a series of public meetings were held in Bushtown to determine what could be done about sewage and water problems. After various alternatives to the problem were put foward, Bushtown residents finally decided that annexation to North City would be the best solution. Besides solving the sewage problem, annexation would also provide adequate fire protection, snow removal services, and resolve sub-standard housing problems. Supported by a North City labor union and the retail merchants association, the Bushtown residents attempted to resolve their difficulties through annexation with North City.

The process of involvement

Since many Bushtown residents did not legally hold title to their land, their petition for annexation was denied by the Ontario Municipal Board. However, the petition and meetings on annexation had created in the people of the area a new awareness of their problems, and a strong determination to seek a solution through all possible channels. The meetings had also informed the citizens of North City of the extent of Bushtown's problems and made them aware of the city's responsibility to Bushtown residents, many of whom worked and conducted their business in North City. Last of all, the meetings and publicity served to emphasize to the provincial government that immediate action was necessary.

In response to local action, the province established a liaison committee to bring together and co-ordinate the activities of various governmental agencies involved. The government's first action was to assume ownership of residential land. Once North City was assured that the provincial government would assume the major responsibility

for Bushtown's servicing and rehabilitation costs, major objections to annexation were dropped. In 1964, Bushtown became an official subdivision of North City.

The first major task of the liaison committee was to select a project manager who was to be responsible for maintaining a site office, co-ordinating surveys in the area, holding meetings with residents, arranging with construction suppliers to provide bulk materials at discount prices, inspecting property standards, discussing with residents living in substandard dwellings the need for repairs, and acting as secretary to the liaison committee.

As a result of this organizational set-up, the co-ordinator quickly became the key person in the Bushtown rehabilitation process. He was able to conduct surveys and meetings with the Bushtown residents and soon became an accepted member of the community who could relate on a one-to-one basis with residents. For two years, he and members of the project staff held meetings on the rehabilitation process and classes in construction methods, spent hours on street corners encouraging neighborhood discussions and individual participation. A clean-up campaign was organized and 740 tons of debris were removed from the area. Residents began to get involved, and started to see tangible results of their participation.

In order to standardize lot sizes and road allowances and to prepare for sewage and water facilities, a subdivision plan was established. This subdivision plan was registered in 1965, seven years after the initial surveys had been conducted. By 1968, sewage lines, water lines, and road improvements had been completed. By 1970, some sidewalks had also been built.

With the installation of services started, residents were assured of the government's sincerity and responsibility in completing the project. As a result, with the aid and consultation of project team staff the community made real progress towards rebuilding and rehabilitating their homes. Many residents continued to improve their properties beyond the minimum standard. Many altered their interior arrangements, by panelling walls and adding windows.

Some homes were required to be relocated. In order to realign streets, homes were moved at provincial cost. Some homes, considered beyond rehabilitation, were demolished after consultation with their owners. Some owners chose to rebuild on their existing or new lots, some found new houses in the area, while others moved into North City. The provincial public-housing agency helped to resettle some senior citizens and a few families who were unable to relocate.

By 1970, the major "hard services" had been finished in Bushtown. Soft services had been assumed by North City.

Summary

The Bushtown experience involved individuals who had previously been accustomed to few regulations and organizations of any kind. At no time during the rehabilitation process did the residents form a citizen's group. However, through the above average effort of the project staff and the co-ordinator, the wants and desires of the residents were incorporated into the rehabilitation and planning process. Rehabilitation gave Bushtown residents renewed confidence in their abilities, a sence of achievement, and a definite stake in their new community. As a result, not only were the physical conditions of Bushtown improved, but the residents themselves gained immeasurably from the experience.

CASE STUDY NO. 5—LAKESTOWN, 1974

The community setting

Lakestown is a rapidly growing city of 150,000 people situated in the centre of a rich agricultural belt. Years ago, Lakestown annexed a few adjacent villages on its outskirts which had provided port and tourist facilities to neighboring cities on the lakeshore. Today, however, these shoreline areas are no longer prosperous centres of specialized activities. With the modernization of shipping technology and the attraction of urbanized tourism, these smaller communities rapidly declined and became a burden on the larger municipality.

The majority of working age members of one of these communities had been employed in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs with salaries ranging from $4,000 to $8,000. Due to these low income levels, most residents were not able to allocate sufficient funds for the maintenance and upkeep of their homes. As a result, many of the community's homes are in need of varying degrees of repair.

The planning issues

These small communities within Lakestown have been suffering from a variety of problems including servicing, environmental pollution, housing stock deterioration and the lack of social facilities:

•The sewage system was inadequate, and overloaded septic tanks and the dumping of raw sewage into the nearby lake has created not only unpleasant odors and discomfort in the community, but a recognized health hazard as well.

•General road conditions were poor. Most were not paved; there were few guard rails, no sidewalks, poor street signage and inadequate street lighting. Originally, streets were designed as cottage lanes and have been maintained as such despite the increase in population and use of the automobile. In addition, there was an inadequate number of pedestrian crosswalks to provide access over a nearby major traffic artery.

•Beach areas had been neglected, and were polluted and littered. Bacteria counts in the beach water were high as a result of the inadequate sewage system.

•The present housing stock was in a deteriorating condition. Most of the homes were originally built as summer cottages of frame construction with no basements. Electrical and heating systems were overloaded and outdated.

•Few recreational facilities were available for use by the community. Community members felt that this deficiency contributed to the area's juvenile delinquency problems. In addition, there have been many complaints that social services were inadequate.

In short, these small communities, faced with a variety of health, social, physical, and recreational problems, were seen by Lakestown city planners as one area in their city in need of community and social rehabilitation.

City officials applied for and received substantial funds from federal and state authorities which were to be applied towards the rehabilitation of specific neighborhoods. However, one of the requirements for receiving federal and state funding through this program was the mandatory involvement of citizens throughout the entire planning process.

The process of involvement

The planners' initial approach to selecting the most needy area in the city in the most democratic manner was to consider all sections of the city which had been identified as problem areas in previous urban renewal studies. The review of these problem areas resulted in the selection of six neighborhoods. The criteria for this selection stage was based on the specific federal program requirements and included updated building condition studies, income levels, surveys of amenities, and each area's apparent sense of community identity. All six areas selected met these basis criteria.

Each area was then requested through a series of public meetings to write and present a brief outlining community conditions, problems, and needs. Working committees of interested residents were formed at public meetings in each area and were asked by the city planners to specifically define the area in their neighborhood to be designated, identify the problems of the community or neighborhood, indicate residents' priorities, and to make recommendations for improvements. (See fig. IV.)

City planning staff maintained a close advisory relationship with the working committees during this phase. They provided technical resources to committee members and attempted to develop for their own benefit a better understanding and appreciation of the character and problems of each area. Planning staff collected data on land use, residential building conditions and income levels for the working committees. Each of the six areas working committees produced excellent briefs which were presented to the planning department in public meetings. With the six briefs and recommendations in hand, city planners made the final neighborhood selection based on a number of considerations, including federal and provincial eligibility criteria, staff studies of the areas and the degree of citizen interest in the program as a whole. The selection was then presented to City Council for ratification.

With the neighborhood identified and selected, the working committee of that area was then able to proceed further in the planning process. Resident sub-committees were established to develop, along with the planning staff, detailed implementation plans for the rehabilitation process. A site office was established to provide the neighborhood with accessibility to information and resources and to bring the city planners into day-to-day contact with neighborhood residents. Working committee decisions were ratified at community public meetings. Committee recommendations as to the implementation of solutions to the problems indentified earlier were presented to City Council and sanctioned with little modification. To date, this process is still continuing as the project is still in the planning stage.

Summary

The success or failure of this approach to citizen involvement in a community rehabilitation project is due largely to the energy of the planning staff. Most of the groundwork was laid by hardworking city staff who spent many evenings and weekends animating the community. The planning staff assumed initial responsibility for establishing, calling and organizing public meetings; organizing, supporting and maintaining working committees; and recognizing the need for and providing essential detailed and comprehensive technical resources to these committees.
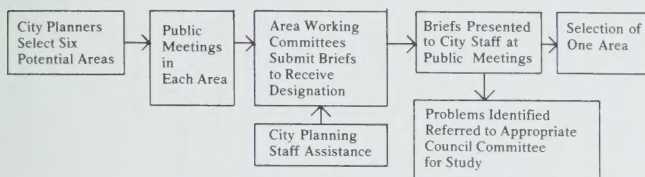
In the same way, the residents themselves recognized the

potential benefits of the rehabilitation program. They immediately responded to the city's initiatives by assuming full responsibility for the actual workings of their committees, and by expressing their concerns in a coherent and articulate manner, providing a solid foundation upon which both planners and residents could proceed.
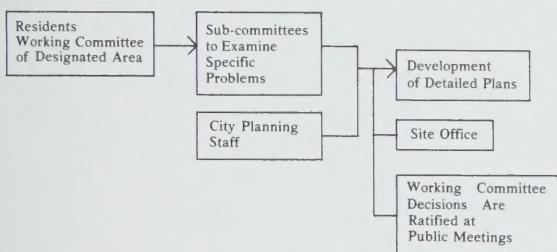
Co-operation is very much a two-way street. The city officials and residents of Lakestown have made their program effective by recognizing and sharing their unique resources to plan for an improved community.

FIGURE IV: LAKESTOWN CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Selection of Area Process

Planning Process

CASE STUDY NO. 6—WATERVILLE, 1974

The community setting

Located in the central region of the province, Waterville is a medium-sized city of approximately 55,000 that reflects its strong element of heavy industrial development. Port facilities, pipeline and oil storage facilities have placed a great constraint on the development of the city in that commerical and industrial considerations have been growing along with the increasing demand for residential and social facilities.

NIP presented an excellent opportunity for Waterville to upgrade and rehabilitate the decaying areas within its boundaries. Municipal staff recognized the potential of the program to benefit both the specific community and the city at large. The city prepared a report on the determination of a designated area, and then embarked upon a detailed planning program which was designed to involve the area residents to the fullest possible extent.

The planning issues

As is the case with many towns whose origins are almost exclusively industrial in nature, prime concern tends to focus on the preservation of the economic stability of the area. In these towns, the orderly development of residential areas is superseded by the maintenance of commerical and industrial facilities. In this way, older residential areas tend to fall

behind: low income residents cannot afford to maintain houses, social facilities are inadequate or lacking, and nearby industrial areas tend to dominate residential areas by their very proximity.

The city staff felt that substantial community rehabilitation could be initiated through the NIP in the South Harbor area of Waterville. This small community had been particularly subject to the costs of industrial growth as evidenced by the physical encroachment of plants and factories, air and noise pollution, lack of park and recreation facilities, and the physicial deterioration of the area's homes.

Once city officials designated the South Harbor area as the NIP area, they established a procedure by which citizens could get involved in the planning process.

The process of involvement

The city staff felt very strongly that early involvement in the planning of projects on the part of those directly affected by them would yield better results. For this reason, a number of methods were used to stimulate and encourage area residents to participate in NIP.

A NIP committee was appointed. Advertisements in the newspapers requested residents to serve on this council committee. Five area residents were chosen. The chairmen of the planning board and the urban renewal executive committee, and two aldermen completed the committee's membership. A resident was elected chairman of this committee.

The duties of the NIP committee were to:
• Advise City Council on the program.
• Meet with area residents to receive their opinions.
• Receive advice from NIP staff and the technical committee regarding planning issues.
• Inform area residents of relevant aspects of NIP and other government programs affecting the area.

A technical advisory committee was established composed of, among others, representatives from the boards of education, city works department, and the city parks and recreation department, social planning and research council and the city planning department. This committee was responsible for reviewing suggestions and complaints made by residents during the information-gathering phase. Comments from the technical advisory committee were considered in the planning process as well.

An information office was opened in the NIP area to provide residents with an opportunity to learn more about the program and to receive suggestions and comments from interested residents. Three community liaison workers were hired to provide additional resource assistance to residents. Working out of the information office, these animators were to:
• Publicize public meetings and encourage participation.
• Meet with the residents to discuss ideas, suggestions and comments.
• Supply residents with information on other government programs and refer residents to appropriate social service agencies.
• Conduct surveys and data-collection activities.
• Report to the NIP project co-ordinator with respect to residents' suggestions, comments and attitudes.

Flyers, newspaper and radio announcements, window displays and handbills were made and circulated to notify residents of public meetings.

Public meetings were held in a local church. The first

meeting introduced the program and gave citizens the opportunity to comment upon local problem areas and concerns. All suggestions were recorded and later either incorporated in the program or checked by NIP staff with the appropriate municipal department. At the second meeting, three concept plans were presented by the NIP staff and local citizens reacted and commented upon their advantages and disadvantages.

A block meeting program was initiated by the community liaison workers to provide an additional opportunity for citizen participation. A door-to-door canvas of area residents supplemented 17 block meetings being held at the information office.

A NIP newsletter was developed and distributed throughout the areas along with a general information brochure to keep residents abreast of the NIP committee's progress while concept plans were being developed.

Once the planning concepts had been developed and accepted by the NIP committee, an information brochure and preference ballot for residents' choices was circulated to supplement the general public meeting.

Following consideration of the survey data, residents' suggestions and balloting, the final plan was submitted to the NIP committee for their approval. The committee unanimously accepted the plan which was then submitted to council and approved.

Residents who are directly affected by the parks and recreation facilities provided under NIP will participate further during the design stage of the project by commenting upon the location of the facilities and related protective measures such as fencing and shrubbery which may be needed.

Waterville's citizen involvement process is depicted in fig. V.

Summary

The extent to which municipal officials believed in early resident involvement in the planning stages of NIP was reflected in their commitment to hire additional staff and to schedule the time required to ensure maximum participation. The process described above extended over five months, and required three additional staff members hired during the summer months.

It is quite apparent that the high degree of co-operation between area residents and city staff is due in large part to the efforts of the staff to provide as much information as possible to area residents and to provide numerous opportunities for citizen involvement. Municipal staff tended to view citizen involvement in the planning process as a partnership of individuals representing various interests— municipal and community—who were working together to achieve the best results for the South Harbor neighborhood.

FIGURE V: WATERVILLE CITIZEN
INVOLVEMENT PROCESS